**SEMINAR AND SPECIAL TOPICS IN MIDDLE GRADES EDUCATION**

**EDUC 690 AND 555**

**TUESDAY 4:00 PM – 9:30 PM**

**GUWC 207**

**SUMMER 2011**

**Instructor: Ms. Kelly Taylor**

**Office: 207 Craig Hall**

**Telephone: 704-406-2209 or 828-413-0117 (cell – for emergencies only)**

**Email:** [**ktaylor2@gardner-webb.edu**](mailto:ktaylor2@gardner-webb.edu)

**Text:** Edwards, C. H. (2005) *Teaching and Learning in Middle and Secondary Schools: Student Empowerment Through Learning Communities.* Upper Saddle River: New Jersey.

Hersch, P. (1998) *A Tribe Apart: A Journey into the Heart of American Adolescence.* New York: New York.

**Course Description:** A study of significant issues, trends, theories, and/or practical problems in education according to the needs and interests of the student(s).The student(s) and professor will collaboratively plan the focus and assessment of the course. A specialized study of current/critical trends and issues in middle grades education. Included will be an emphasis on developmentally appropriate middle grades education practices grounded in the standards of the professional learned societies, INTASC, NBPTS, and the North Carolina State Board of Education programmatic guidelines and standards.

**Rationale:** Since shared adult agendas and student priorities guide decision making in middle level education, teachers’ effectiveness is often linked to their development of a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of early adolescent learners. Middle level educators who design and implement instruction, which is developmentally responsive to the needs of young adolescents increase opportunities for students’ achievement. Through their planning and implementation of developmentally responsive instruction, teachers facilitate the widest possible range of social, intellectual, emotional, moral, and physical experiences in order to meet all needs of the young adolescent.

**Communication:**

I will communicate with you primarily through the course page I have created on BLACKBOARD (WEB CT). Here you will find the syllabus, handouts, assessments, etc. Also, it is here that I will notify you of emergencies, changes in plans, adaptations for assignments, etc. **PLEASE CHECK THIS SITE OFTEN.** IF I make a change in assignments or post information, etc., **you** are responsible for having checked the course page and being up-to-date. Failure to see a change does not grant you an exception from any assignment or change in plans, so my advice remains – **check early, check often**. **BE SURE TO NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENTS.** However, if you need to make me aware of something, you should e-mail me via regular G-WU e-mail. When you communicate with me via e-mail, please do so only from your G-WU address. Other addresses (Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.) often do not make it past the filters in our server. We will use several of the BLACKBOARD options for class work rather than hand- outs/paper assignments in class, so make sure that you are familiar with the environment.

**Participation:**

Participation in class, individual assignments, and group assignments is mandatory. In order for you to be successful in this class, it is essential that you are prepared and ready to participate at each class meeting.

**Attendance:**

Students are expected to be in class. Please remember that Gardner-Webb University maintains a 75% attendance policy. Students should realize that missing a class does not grant an exemption from any work, assignments, readings, etc. ***It is incumbent upon the student, not the professor, to be responsible for assignments, both those on the syllabus and any made in*** ***class.***

**Accommodations:**

If your learning or participation in this class might be affected in any way by a disability recognized under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you will need to do the following:

1. Register with the Noel Program for the Disabled at Gardner Webb University at (704) 406-4270
2. Educate me about your disability so that I can work with you and the Noel Program to arrange necessary accommodations. It is important that you take both of these steps no later than the first week of the semester.

**Course Objectives:**

Through the successful performance of the activities in this course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand and apply current middle level research in the classroom.
2. Create responsive middle school environments based on the personhood of the adolescent.
3. Articulate and implement curriculum theories, research, and exemplary practices concerning various topics of controversy facing middle level educators.
4. Articulate and implement various support structures for middle school students in their academic, intellectual, and emotional growth.
5. Exhibit high expectations for students and express dialogue that is mature, sensitive, and discreet when counseling middle level students.
6. Work in and create strong team relationships including a working relationship with colleagues, students, and parents.

**Learning Tasks/Activities/Learner Responsibilities:**

1. Read *A Tribe Apart* and respond to online discussion questions weekly.
2. Participate in on-line learning modules and complete all activities within the modules.
3. Choose two of the following topics and prepare a one hour presentation/discussion/activity for the class. You may complete this assignment in pairs or small groups. Check the tentative schedule for dates for each topic. Topics are as follows:
   1. Merit Pay
   2. Teacher Evaluation
   3. Grouping
   4. Gender-based Education
   5. Assessment
   6. Grading
   7. Web 2.0 Tools
   8. Bullying
4. Choose a chapter or two from *Teaching and Learning in Middle and Secondary Schools* and prepare a one hour presentation/discussion/activity for the class. You may complete this assignment individually or in pairs, however if you decide to do this in pairs you must choose at least two chapters. Check the tentative schedule for dates for each chapter.
5. Complete all assigned activities in class and participate in all class activities and discussions.

**Grades:**

The grading scale will be as follows:

20% = In-class activities and participation

20% = Participation in on-line discussions

20% = Completion of learning module activities

20% = Chapter presentations

20% = Topic presentations

The grading scale will be as follows:

**A = 93-100**

**B = 92-85**

**C = 84-77**

**Anything lower than a 77 will result in an “F” for the course**

**Tentative Course Calendar: Subject to change at instructor’s discretion. (TLMSS is *Teaching and Learning in Middle and Secondary Schools*; ATA is *A Tribe Apart*)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Assignment Due**  (In-class/*Online)* |
| **5/31** | Introduction/Welcome; Learning Communities (Chapter 1, TLMSS); Technology in Schools | Purchase texts, Presentation selections |
| **6/7** | **Ch. Presentation:** Student Differences and Needs  **Topic Presentation:** Grouping | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Chs. 1 & 2  *ATA Prologue- Ch. 1* |
| **6/14** | **Ch. Presentations:** Autonomy and Student Empowerment  How Students Learn  **Topic Presentation:** Gender-Based Education | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Chs. 3 & 4  *ATA Ch. 2-4* |
| **6/21** | **Ch. Presentation:** Multicultural Education and Exceptionality in Learning Communities  **Topic Presentation:** Bullying | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Ch. 5  *ATA Ch. 5-7* |
| **6/28** | **Ch. Presentation:** Teaching as Reflection and Decision Making  **Topic Presentation:** Assessment | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Ch. 6  *ATA Ch. 8-11* |
| **7/5** | **Ch. Presentations:** Instructional Planning in Learning Communities  Intellectual Development and Social Growth  **Topic Presentation:** Web 2.0 Tools | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Chs. 7 & 8  *ATA Ch. 12-14* |
| **7/12** | **Ch. Presentations:** Motivation in Learning Communities  Discipline in Learning Communities  **Topic Presentation:** Merit Pay | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Chs. 9 & 10  *ATA Ch. 15-18* |
| **7/19** | **Ch. Presentation:** Measuring and Evaluating Learning and Schooling  **Topic Presentation:** Grading | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Ch. 11  *ATA Ch. 19-20* |
| **7/26** | On-line Day – Finish up work on learning modules | Report on technology activity from last class  *ATA Ch. 21-Epilogue*  *All on-line work should be finished by 8/1* |
| **8/2** | **Ch. Presentations:** Teacher Improvement  Working with Parents and Community  **Topic Presentation:** Teacher Evaluation | Report on technology activity from last class  TLMSS Chs. 12 & 13 |